

## Project Update

ConocoPhillips Australia is planning to undertake exploration activities in offshore permits VIC/P79 and T/49P located in Commonwealth waters. The proposed activities are a continuation of ConocoPhillips Australia's exploration program in the offshore Otway Basin which aims to identify commercially viable natural gas reserves to help meet Australia's energy needs.

### About the Otway Exploration Drilling Program

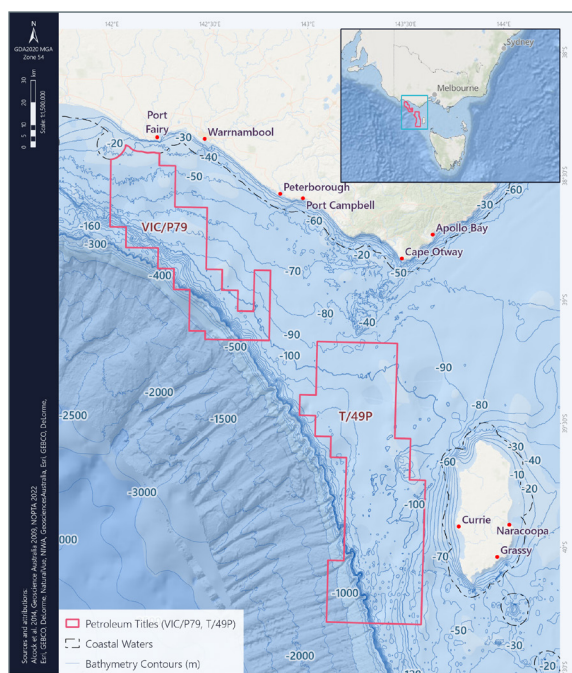
ConocoPhillips Australia is proposing to undertake an exploration drilling program that consists of seabed surveys and the drilling of up to six exploration wells in exploration permits VIC/P79 and T/49P located in Commonwealth waters offshore of Victoria and King Island, Tasmania.

ConocoPhillips Australia has commenced preparation of an Environment Plan (EP) that will seek approval for this exploration drilling program to be undertaken. Drilling commencement is dependent on regulatory approval and rig availability. The initial activity will be a vessel-based seabed survey that will commence no earlier than January 2024.

This information sheet summarises the next phase of our Environment Plan development and consultation, where we will be establishing the context of our proposed activity. We are now able to share a more detailed description of our activity and the existing environment, and a preliminary environmental impact and risk assessment, as well as information on the legislative requirements that apply to our activity.

We have also created an online mapping tool where individuals, organisations and associations can share feedback about locations of environmental values and sensitivities.

### Permit Areas



### KEY INFORMATION

- ConocoPhillips Australia is planning to undertake an exploration drilling program in the Otway Basin and is preparing an Environment Plan (EP) which will be submitted to the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) for public comment and assessment. Any decision to proceed to development will be dependent on a conducive investment environment.
- A preliminary environmental impact and risk assessment has been developed to inform ongoing EP development and to support consultation.
- ConocoPhillips Australia is now looking for feedback on values and sensitivities within the environmental planning area to help inform our assessments.
- Individuals, organisations and associations are invited to share feedback on locations with values and sensitivities through an online interactive map via the consultation hub.

Activity Overview

ConocoPhillips Australia is seeking to identify commercially viable natural gas reserves that can be developed to contribute towards energy security for the Australian east coast domestic market. As a titleholder, ConocoPhillips Australia has made a commitment to undertake exploration activities within timeframes agreed by the Commonwealth National Offshore Petroleum Titles Administrator (NOPTA).

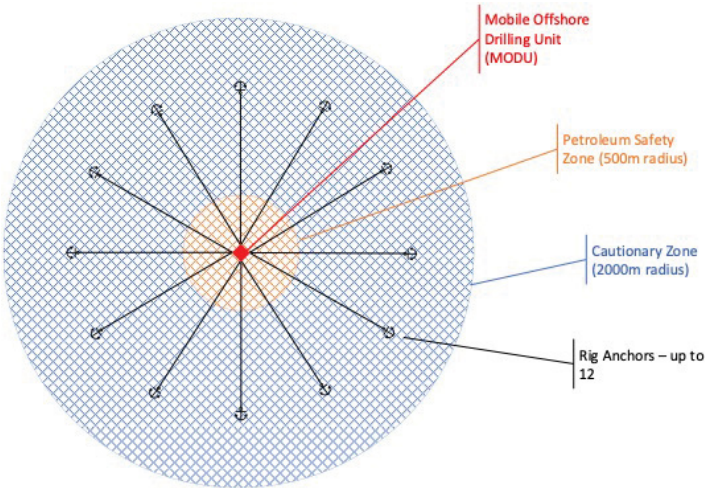
ConocoPhillips Australia is proposing to undertake an exploration program that consists of seabed surveys and the drilling of up to six exploration wells in exploration permits VIC/P79 and T/49P, located in Commonwealth waters offshore of Victoria and King Island, Tasmania, as outlined below.

Parameter	Seabed Survey	Drilling
The broadest timeframe and spatial extent of the activity		
Earliest start date	1 January 2024	1 October 2024
Latest finish date	31 December 2028	31 December 2028
Maximum number of locations	9 (to support confirmation of final drilling locations)	6 (2 firm wells and up to 4 optional wells).
Spatial extent (within which activity can occur)	Operational Areas within T/49P and Vic/P79	Operational Areas within T/49P and Vic/P79
Narrowing the timing and location of the activities to the current best estimates		
Maximum duration	1 week per seabed survey location	Up to 90 days of drilling per location
Spatial extent (within which activity can occur)	324 km <sup>2</sup> (Nine locations, each 6 x 6 km) within Operational Areas	75 km <sup>2</sup> (Six locations, each a 2 km radius Drilling Area) within Operational Areas

Exclusion Zones

During drilling, three types of exclusion zones will be in place at set times and locations:

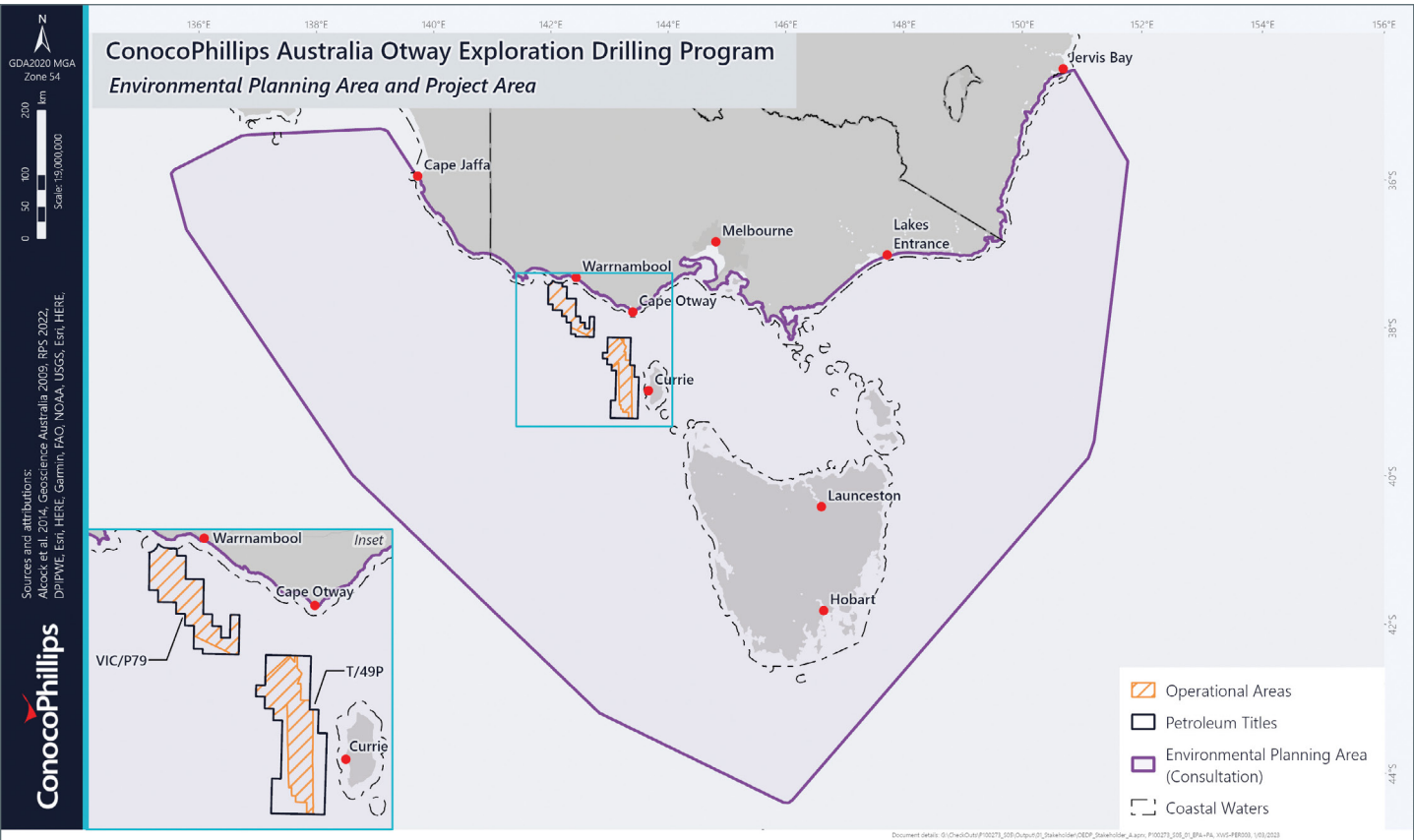
- Safe Navigation Area** – A 500 m radius safe navigation area will be established around seabed survey vessels and any towed equipment when conducting seabed surveys.
- Petroleum Safety Zone** – A 500 m radius petroleum safety zone will be enforced around each drilling location once the drilling rig is in position.
- Cautionary Zone** – A 2 km radius cautionary zone will be established around the drilling rig once in position. This zone will cover the area of seabed anchors and mooring equipment and will be maintained by support vessels.



## Environmental Planning Area Map

The Environmental Planning Area has been established as the largest physical area ConocoPhillips Australia will use for planning the proposed Otway Exploration Drilling Program and includes the marine environment and a 1 km buffer into coastal areas. This area has been established to support the identification of marine and coastal environmental values and sensitivities, and relevant persons and organisations with functions, interests and activities that may be affected by the proposed activity.

## Environmental Planning Area Map



## Understanding the Existing Environment

The marine environment of the offshore Otway Basin, Victoria is a diverse and dynamic ecosystem that supports a range of important physical, ecological, socio-economic and cultural activities and values. Understanding the existing environment creates a reference point from where we can evaluate the impacts and risks of the proposed Otway Exploration Drilling Program. The existing conditions are also used to determine the significance of the impacts and risks and to identify any necessary mitigation measures, management strategies or additional baseline studies.

The Environmental Planning Area encompasses a wide range of habitats and marine species including fish, crustaceans, birds, marine turtles, marine mammals and kelp forests. The marine environment also supports a range of cultural values and socio-economic activities including, but not limited to, commercial fishing, shipping, gas production and recreational activities.

The table below provides an overview of environmental considerations and why they are assessed in an Environment Plan.

Table 1 Environmental Considerations

Environmental Component		Understanding Required	Sub-components Considered
Physical Environment	The physical environment refers to the non-living natural elements of an ecosystem	Understanding the physical environment is essential for comprehending the functioning of an ecosystem and for developing sustainable management practices that preserve and enhance the ecological, socio-economic and cultural values of the environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water quality.</li> <li>• Sediment quality.</li> <li>• Air quality.</li> <li>• Climate.</li> <li>• Ambient light.</li> <li>• Ambient sound.</li> </ul>
Ecological Environment	The ecological environment refers to the living components of an ecosystem, as well as their interactions with each other and with the nonliving elements of the environment.	Understanding the ecological environment is important for conserving biodiversity, preserving the integrity and functioning of ecosystems and supporting the livelihoods of communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benthic habitats and communities.</li> <li>• Coastal habitats and communities.</li> <li>• Plankton invertebrates.</li> <li>• Fish.</li> <li>• Birds.</li> <li>• Marine reptiles</li> <li>• Marine mammals</li> <li>• Conservation values and sensitivities.</li> </ul>
Socio-economic Environment	The socio-economic environment refers to the social and economic relationships between people and the environment including the physical, psychological and economic elements that shape human well-being.	Understanding the socio-economic environment is critical for developing effective and equitable environmental management strategies that balance the needs of people with the conservation of the environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal communities.</li> <li>• Commercial fisheries.</li> <li>• Defence activities.</li> <li>• Offshore petroleum activities.</li> <li>• Offshore renewable energy activities.</li> <li>• Other offshore infrastructure.</li> <li>• Tourism.</li> <li>• Recreational diving and fishing.</li> <li>• Shipping.</li> </ul>
Cultural Environment	The cultural environment refers to both First Nations and European cultures.	Understanding the cultural environment is critical for developing effective and equitable management strategies that consider cultural values and sensitivities that may be affected by environmental change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Nations Peoples.</li> <li>• Native Title.</li> <li>• Maritime archaeological heritage (including shipwrecks).</li> </ul>

## Identifying Environmental Values and Sensitivities

To support our understanding of the marine environment of the offshore Otway Basin, ConocoPhillips Australia is inviting individuals, organisations and associations to provide additional context and feedback on our proposed activity through an online collaborative mapping process.

Individuals, organisations and associations are encouraged to visit the consultation hub and use the interactive map to identify (pin) locations of interest or concern and provide additional information or comment on existing pins.

Environmental values and sensitivities can be physical, ecological, socio-economic and/or cultural.



## Questions

### and Answers

#### ***What is an environmental value and sensitivity?***

Environmental values and sensitivities include rare, important and/or sensitive physical, ecological, socio-economic and/or cultural features of the environment. Examples from NOPSEMA are provided below:

- The values and sensitivities of the marine environment may include benthic communities and habitats, marine fauna and the quality of the water, sediment and biota.
- The values and sensitivities that exist in relation to Protected Matters (Part 3 EPBC Act) may include World Heritage Values, National Heritage Values, the ecological character of declared RAMSAR wetlands, listed threatened species and ecological communities, listed migratory species and Marine Parks.
- The values and sensitivities of socio-economic features of the environment including the rights of other users which are to be managed responsibly.

Other examples may include biologically important areas, habitats critical to the survival of threatened species, key ecological features, marine and coastal industries (i.e., commercial shipping, Defence, petroleum exploration and production), marine tourism and recreation, and Commonwealth and State managed commercial fisheries, and cultural heritage features and values.

#### ***Will ConocoPhillips Australia only assess the Environmental Components and Sub-components listed above?***

Through the feedback that we receive during consultation, we will continue building on our understanding and learnings of the environmental values and sensitivities during our Environment Plan process. Those learnings that are predicted to cross-over with our proposed activities will be carried through to the full assessment of impacts and risks which will be detailed in our EP and sent to the regulator for assessment.

#### ***How will environmental impacts and risks be assessed in the EP?***

Exploration activities do not operate to a zero-impact standard. Instead, ConocoPhillips Australia is required to define the acceptable level of impact, and work below that level. Acceptable levels of impact are established based on relevant up-to-date technical and scientific studies, government advice, and are considerate of the information gathered through the consultation process.

The predicted levels of impact and risk expected to occur are then compared to the previously defined acceptable levels. This assessment is then scrutinised by the independent regulator, NOPSEMA, who will determine if the EP demonstrates that the environmental impacts and risks of the activity will be of an acceptable level and meets all the requirements of the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulations 2009.



## Preliminary Environmental Impact and Risk Assessment and Relevant Legislative Requirements

Our Preliminary Environmental Impacts and Risk Assessment report and a list of currently identified legislative requirements are available online from the Consultation Hub Document Library.

### Meet the Project Team

We will be visiting Victorian and Tasmanian coastal communities throughout May and June to meet with local businesses and community groups and to host information sessions. If you would like to be informed of upcoming information sessions to be held near you, please get in touch with us on [otway@conocophillips.com](mailto:otway@conocophillips.com)

*Contact us*

### Webinar

Can't get to an information session? Register for our online webinar series via our consultation hub. The next Webinar will be held on Wednesday 23 May 2023 commencing at 5pm AEST.

*Register here*

### Have we missed anyone?

If there is someone you believe to be affected by the proposed activities, please have them contact us using the details below.

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